



What Is Facilitated Dialogue?

“Facilitated Dialogue” is a form of interpretive facilitation that uses a strategically designed set of questions – an “arc of dialogue” -- to guide participants into a structured, meaningful, audience-centered conversation about a challenging or controversial topic.

There are several components that make Facilitated Dialogue successful:

- **An Interpretive Experience** – What interpretive experience can I integrate that will give everyone the opportunity to connect, in their own way, to the meanings of the site or topic? This experience will become the springboard for the dialogue. This can be anything interpretive (a talk, walk, tour, exhibit, film, demonstration, activity, etc)
- **Dialogue Introduction** consists of a welcome to the participants and the following:
 - The interpretive purpose—what we will explore together
 - The dialogic purpose – why we’re using dialogue as our approach
 - Group Guidelines/Agreements – What are the group agreements or guidelines that will keep participants safe and encourage constructive exchange?
- **Arc of Dialogue (Phased Questions)** – Phase 1 (Community Building); Phase 2 (Sharing Our Experiences); Phase 3 (Exploring Beyond our Experiences); and Phase 4 (Synthesizing and Bringing Closure to the Dialogue) – What questions can you ask for each phase based on the resource, audience, location, etc...?
- **Dialogue Conclusion** – At the end of Phase 4, the facilitator pulls the threads together from the shared experience, and synthesizes the meanings that emerged from the dialogue; thanks the participants and officially concludes the experience
- **Dialogue Techniques** – What techniques will complement the questions in each Phase of the dialogue by enhancing personal and group exploration of the topic?

Examples of Techniques to Foster Dialogue

- **Popcorn** - capturing participants spontaneous thoughts and writing them down for everyone to see
- **Gallery Walk** - Participants read over several quotes or statements that are posted throughout the room. Give participants time to read each one; then invite participants to stand by the quote/statement that most moved or struck them in some way (“they want to talk more about the quote/statement.”) Then ask participants to respond to a specific question.
- **Graffiti Wall** - allow participants to illustrate their response/reaction to a question, statement, or quote rather than describe in words. Allow time for participants to review the graffiti wall.
- **Chalk talk** - People react/respond (either by writing directly on whiteboard or sticky note) to a question/statement and then participants read the responses either individually or in groups.
- **Fish Bowl** - arrange chairs in two circles (inner and outer), have participants in one of the circles respond/react to question, statement, quote, etc... while the other circle (group) listens. Swap groups to give the silent group of listeners the same opportunity.
- **Pair Share** - two participants react/respond to a question, statement, quote, etc...

- **Small Groups (or Cooperative Learning Groups)** - more than two participants reacting/responding to a question, statement, quote, etc...
- **Your “two cents”**- participants are given two pennies during the discussion they are only allowed two opportunities to share in the discussion. Once they have used their two pennies they must listen to others in the group.
- **Carpet of Ideas** - participants react/respond to a question, statement, quote, etc... on a large size index card. Once participants complete their response they share them on the “carpet” or floor in a designated area ... the facilitator leads a discussion based on the responses from the cards and/or allows participants to react to the responses.
- **Footprints** - Allow participants to walk or choose to walk through the footprints of a specific group based on specific questions or a shared experience.
- **Ballot Box** - Allow participants to vote on a controversial topic and engage participants in a conversation about the results.
- **Film series** - Invite participants to engage in a longer dialogic process (several films on the same topic but from different points of view)
- **E-dialogue** - Conduct a blog w/ participants or a virtual book club using the ARC of Dialogue model.
- **Hands-off Facilitation**- facilitator completely steps back and allows the conversation to flow fluidly, maintaining a safe space.
- **Caucusing** - Allow visitors to be active participants (i.e. How do you identify? In groups, work together to...What are the challenges and how do people see you? How do you see yourself?) by identifying with their respective group (race, culture, religion, neighborhood, etc...) to explore difficult issues within the safety of the “identity group.”
- **Serial Testimony** - Participants get to react and share without interruption or questions from the other group members. This might be timed.
- **Anonymous Testimony** - Participants react/respond to a questions, statement, quote, etc and anonymously submit their answer on large index card, the cards are posted and conversation occurs around the responses to the questions rather than on the person who made the comment.
- **Photolanguage** - examination of photos; participants review the photo collection (without choosing a photograph); after review participants are given the opportunity to go to the photo that resonates with them. Allow participants to share why the photograph is important. (I.e. choose a photograph that represents immigration as you understand it).
- **Mutual Invitation** - In small groups, one participant invites the other person to share (i.e. What troubles you most about our collective response to current immigration? What do you find most reassuring?) Give groups enough time to respond.
- **Dialogue w/ mobile device** - allow participants to respond to specific questions anonymously. (e.g. Using Socrative, a smart response system (<http://www.socrative.com/>), allows for anonymity but gives participants an opportunity to see and respond to responses as they are given.
- **Wagon Wheel or Concentric Circles**- divide the entire group into two groups of equal number. The first group is asked to arrange chairs—one person to person—in a circle facing out. The second group then arranges around the inner circle and with their chairs facing in. The result is two concentric circles with chairs that face one another to form pairs. After a question is posed give a specific time to respond. At the end of the time, the pairs stand up and each person moves one seat to his or her right. In effect, the two concentric wheels are moving in clockwise and counterclockwise directions to create new pair groupings.
- **Vote with Your Feet** – post two or more statements on the wall and ask participants to stand by the one they most agree with; this provides a visual quantification of the group’s perspectives, and allows for discussion about multiple perspectives